

I wanted to make you aware that the Obama Administration recently announced a new strategy to combat the genocide in Darfur, a tragedy that has left an estimated 450,000 people dead and millions displaced. On October 19, the President indicated that our nation would pursue a more “comprehensive” policy whereby the President of the Sudan, who has been [indicted for crimes against humanity](#) by the International Criminal Court, would face additional sanctions if his government continued to facilitate the genocide, but be provided “incentives” for taking constructive actions to improve the situation on the ground and advance peace.

Like all human rights supporters, it is my hope that the Obama Administration’s carrot and stick policy proves successful. But I am very concerned that the policy reveals a lack of understanding about the Sudanese President’s consistent pattern of broken promises. It is oftentimes easy for hostile foreign leaders to appear to make positive strides toward peace and justice, while the truth is that they are only using promises and half-hearted gestures to temporarily avoid the international spotlight. In the meantime, such dictators frequently prepare to resume their atrocities after a brief season of supposed progress. I’m concerned that the Obama Administration is taking such a [naïve and unreasonably optimistic approach](#) towards [I ran](#), and is now taking the same gamble with Sudan.

Under the leadership of President George W. Bush, and with my support, our nation has actively sought an end to the genocide in Darfur since it began in 2003. We declared that the atrocities do indeed constitute genocide, appointed special envoys to address the situation, worked aggressively to broker peace accords between the government and the rebel groups, pressured China and the Arab League to use their influence to pressure Sudan to stop the genocide, successfully pushed for a strong United Nations peacekeeping force, enforced tough sanctions against the regime, and provided billions of dollars in humanitarian aid. The good news is that these and other actions have contributed to a reduction in violence in Darfur.

The atrocities continue, however, and I believe the United States should be pursuing additional strong actions such as a NATO-enforced no fly zone, rather than further engaging a dictator who has been arrested for war crimes and has an unmistakable history of broken commitments. It is disappointing that some groups that criticized President Bush for “not doing enough” have expressed their tentative support for President Obama’s risky and unproven policy. Everyone who is concerned about the tragedy in Darfur—Congress and human rights advocates alike—should work together in urging President Obama to support strong and effective policies that will put an end to the genocide once and for all.

